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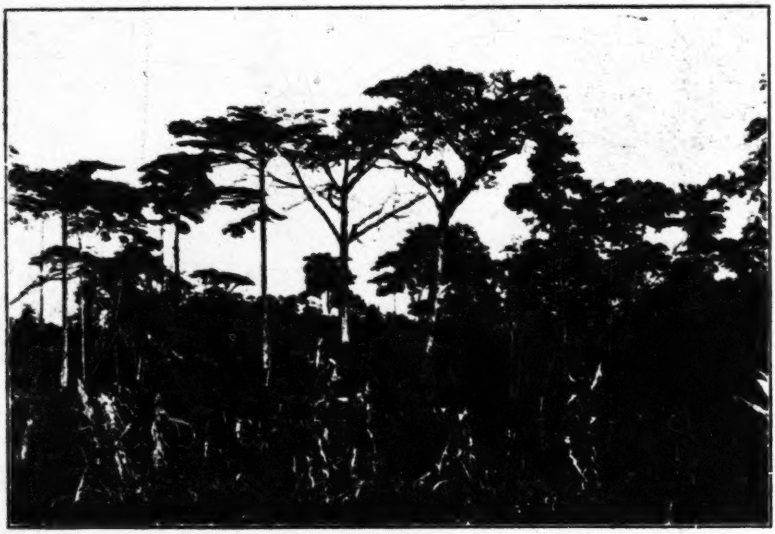

Fig. 52. Plantation of Groundnuts and Maize near Bébai (Esseng Family), Southern Cameroons.

433 435 244 of groundnuts rises to ten spears (equal to 70 pfennigs) while at other times only five spears (equal to 35 pfennigs) are given for it. In the Jaunde region, it is true, a plate always costs 70 pfennigs (equal to 100 Jaunde spears). The groundnut is eaten simply as soup or compote. /92/ /Fig. 52 appears here in the original text. / The oil content of the nuts is not utilized to 302 any great extent, but the oil released by cooking is rubbed on the skin in order not to waste it. Finally we might mention the ●524 riddle:

onṓn	o	nga	bḗī́	a fắ	e	
(A) bird,	it	lives	give birth to	behind the house	of the	
bonī́ĕ̄:	akī́	avōk	a	kö̆ke	bŏ̄n	avū́m
mothers:	egg	one;	there	creep out	young ones	ten.

Answer: owŭno = groundnut.

243 Maize, *Zea mays* L. (fŭ́n IV), as we have said, is almost always grown with the groundnut (Fig. 52), usually as a means of marking off the individual plots and as a border against the bush all around the plantation. Farms that grow maize

243 exclusively are comparatively rare. Just like the groundnut, maize is planted in the beginning of October and matures in December. Then it is again planted in March and matures between the middle of May and July. Guess a riddle! = kăndăń.

524 I guess = kandăń.
ma yĕn bonĕnga, bö mbe ekŏ-ne, bŏnĕnga bete:
I see women, they were on a journey, women meant:

mabum a mabum
bellies – bellies.

I see women who came on a journey (that is, who formerly were not here), and they are all pregnant (the ears in the husks).

Answer: fu'n = maize. /93/

244 The Ngon, Cucumeropsis edulis Cogn. (ngŏn IV, Jaunde; ngôn IV Fang)

(Plate 8)

The ngon is one of the cucurbitaceous plants and has pentagonal leaves (more rarely the leaves have five lobules) with finely serrated edges. The leaves are attached to the nearly round stalk at intervals where, in addition to an occasional offshoot, usually another shoot, one or two male panicles, and occasionally a single female blossom are found. A piece of such a stalk is illustrated by Plate 8. The blossoms, jokingly called atsi'ne kŭ, "turtle's feet," by the Fang, are not very large and have lemon yellow petals which are turned back. The female blossoms (d and e) are somewhat variable in size and bear a hypogenous ovary; their margin and pistil are green. As for the male blossoms (b-c), on the other hand, the stamens are yellow on top. The fruit is large, longish, and egg-shaped.

In the Fang region three varieties of ngon are distinguished. These varieties are recognizable, however, only by their fruits

244 834 Sso of the Jaunde, sexual abstinence effectively lasts only three months. The Fang say that the ngon would not grow if the prohibition were broken, and since with them the belly counts for more than love, this prohibition is generally observed.

244 252 [824] Only the softer interior of the ngon kernel can be eaten. The kernels must therefore be cracked open, and this is done by means of a little stick from the tree *Microdesmis puberula* Hook. f., Euphorbiaceae (*obīmvǒ′n*), with which they lightly strike the seed after placing it on end. Old and young, men and women, participate in this task which is carried out inside and in front of the dwelling house, as well as in the meeting house. It is an activity characterized by a peculiar clicking noise not easily forgotten once one has heard it. In spite of its importance in the household, the ngon is not prepared in a great variety of ways; like the groundnut, it is eaten only in the form of a soup or it is pulverized and boiled in a leaf bundle.

● 524 In conclusion, patient reader, *kǎ́ndǎṅ* (guess a riddle!); *kǎndǎ́ṅ* (I guess):

akǒṅ	*afǫ̆′,*	*e*	*mane*	*nkū′na*	*ngūī̄,*
spear	one,	he	makes ready	herd-	swine.

Answer:

okǒ̄k	*ofǫ̆′,*	*e*	*mane*	*džắd*	*e*	*ngǫ̂n*
beater	one,	he	makes ready	bush plate	(with)	ngon.

244 Yams, as a secondary crop with ngon, are of two principal kinds: the three-leaved yams, *Dioscorea dumetorum* (Kunth) Pax (*andḗă*); and the common yams, *Dioscorea minutiflora* Engl. (*emvūi̦*). /99/ Each has four species. In addition, the Pangwe differentiate two more kinds which, however, perhaps belong to *Dioscorea minutiflora* or are close to it: *žǫ̆́ǭ* III Ntum, *dzǫ̆* (plural, *bīŏ′*) Fang; and *ebǫ̆́zǭǭ*. In the Jaunde region there is furthermore the Jaunde yam with large tubers, *ekǭ′da* Jaunde. Finally, the air tuber yam, *Dioscorea sativa* L. (*alǒ́k*), is also cultivated, but only in very small quantities. As we said above, the conditions for the growth of the yam resemble those of the ngon; it also climbs up the brush and trees left lying about,

244 great numbers on the leaves of all cultivated plants, especially cassava and sugar cane. There are seven varieties of cassava, but it would take us too far afield to enumerate them here. As Figure 54 indicates, cassava is planted by heaping a little soil over the shoot. /100/

249 Similarly, sugar cane, Saccharum officinarum L. (nkṓk I), is "planted" during the rainy season. Its shoots are taken from the upper part of the stalk, called the "arrow" (Pangwe: esǭ́k), but it requires a longer period of time to ripen for it is not harvested until after the second subsequent rainy season, in other words, after thirteen months. Cassava and sugar cane are frequently found together in a planted area, often with cultivated plantains also interspersed among them.

Riddles

● 524

1.	ošũ̄e	e	ne	m'	oko,	ke	a	wūlū̧
(A)	water,	it	is	to me	there,	not	(to)	flow.

--The sap in the sugar cane.

2. bangā́-tšĭ̆da (1)	be	ne	m'	oko,	vŏ	medžǫ̌ke
wives-father's	they	are	to me	there,	merely	(with) dancing caps,

1. Archaic form; nowadays the usual form is boyā́.

medžǫ̌́k
dancing caps.

--masą̌m me nkṓk = blossoms of the sugar cane.

3.	ma	vūǎn	okṓ-a	ngǒ́k,	o	ke	lǔme
	I	throw-to	a little stone from the	rubble,	it	goes	hitting

nga	ndǒń-kǫ̌dǭ		abǒń
woman,	Ndongkodo,	(at the)	knee.

The solution to this last riddle will be apparent from the following drawing (Fig. 55). Ndongkodo is a jocular name for sugar cane and alludes to the curvature of its stem; ndǒń, ndǒnó originally meant

524 "star," "sun," and was later carried over for people and used as a /Fig. 55 appears here in the original text/ personal name, and kǒt – bent; we would perhaps say: "Your Excellency Von Bent."

244 I now turn to the second part of the cultivated plants, those that are cultivated in gardens, that is, in small operations and for the most part behind or close to the dwelling. To be sure, the difference between field and garden cultivation is not everywhere sharply defined. For instance, the garden plant taro is often planted at a distance from the village in fields, and plantains are frequently grown on cassava farms and other farms.

Taro, *Colocasia antiquorum* Schott (atú), and Macabo, *Xanthosoma violaceum* Schott (ekǎbe)

The taro or Colocasia is -- as the Latin name indicates -- a cultivated plant of some antiquity even for the Pangwe; hence [177] they have no ready explanation for the name atú. The macabo, on the other hand, which stems from /101/ America, has only recently been introduced and, according to the natives, was

[249]

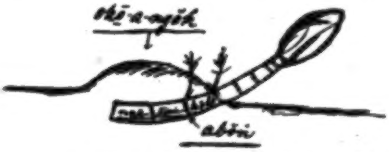

Fig. 55. Sugar Cane Shoot.

taken over by the coastal peoples about thirty years ago (1);

[805] 1. As soon as one has become familiar with the Negroes' ability to estimate time, one becomes very cautious with respect to the preciseness of historical dates.

hence its name ekǎbe from a kǎb-an, "to hand over, to divide, to take possession of." Both plants belong to the Araceae family. Taro is distinguished from macabo by the fact that its leaves are

245

Fig. 56. Plantains (Negro Bananas) and Bananas near Nssälang (Essáuong Family)

●[524] Riddle:

mǒněnga	e	ne	m'	okő,	a	wǭ́le
woman	she	is	to me	there,	she	many

bḗ	bǭ̌n,	kaa		nǘm
gives birth to	children,	no	(without)	man.

Answer: ekǭ́n = plantain.

That is precisely the ideal: reward without labor, fruit without effort, food which without the work of hands grows into one's mouth. In this sense the plantain, like its sister, the banana, is really the most deserving of all the cultivated plants of the name "paradisiaca." Of the banana, Musa paradisiaca var. sapientum L., there are two species: the bush banana (adžūi, adžūi-ekǭ́n); and the noble banana (etǫ̌t, etǫ̌t-ekǭ́n). As is apparent from /103/ /Fig. 56 appears here in the original text / the name, even among the Pangwe the banana is regarded as a variety of plantain. The noble banana, the one we know, was introduced from the coast, according to the Pangwe. At first it was called madžūi

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302 that raffia palm oil is evidently offensive to lice /Fig. 143 appears here in the original text/ and prevents them from becoming too intimate with their "host." In the case of skin diseases
[757] (Krokro /Ed.,?/ and scabies) and of sand flea wounds, it is even used as a remedy.

Oil (mbŏn) is obtained mainly from palms: in the north, only from the oil palm; in the south, rarely from this tree and mainly from the raffia palm. At times it is also produced from the kernels of Mimusops djave (Lan.) Engl. (adžă'n; fruit, ebŏn; kernels, ngŏn IV-ebŏn), from the kernels of the Carapa procera D. C. (engă'n), and only very rarely from groundnuts (see page 58).

The oil of the raffia palm is used exclusively for the care of the skin, while that of the oil palm is used for the same purpose for the greater part, only from one-sixth to one-fifth being consumed as food.

Fig. 143. Toothbrush.

(a) Raffia palm oil.

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303 The fruit (azŭ̃i'), not yet fully ripe, is carried in baskets from the swamp to the village where they are kept for six days under banana leaves and pieces of banana stalks. Then the scaly shell, insofar as it has not fallen in of its own accord, is removed, and the layer rich in oil, which is located between the armor and the seed, is peeled off by hand or with the help of a scale from the shell. The following riddle refers to the latter procedure. /191/

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303
/Fig. 144 appears here in the original text./

ma	vīi		•mot	oko,		okŏn,	o	mbe	a
I	killed	(a)	person	there,	(the)	knife,	it	was	to him

nie	abum	a	si,	o	wo	ma	ba	nie
(at the)	belly	below,		with	which	I	divide	him

a	oa
for	you!

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303

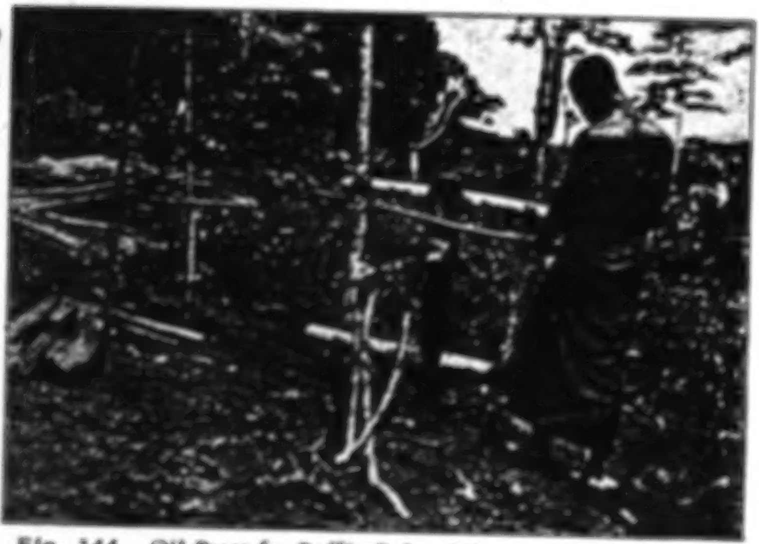

Fig. 144. Oil Press for Raffia Palm Oil.
To the left the pulp containing oil is being heated over the fire.

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"With the knife that he had below at his belly, I shall divide him for you."

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303

A little water is added to the pulp which contains the oil, it is stirred and then placed on a piece of bark to lie in the sun for a few days. It is then put on a frame (Fig. 144, left) and, by means of a fire laid under it, is thoroughly heated for half an hour to an hour. Afterwards it is placed in a little basket,

[945] specifically made for this purpose (ekuit azũʃ) from the Ancistrophyllum (nkãne), which is squeezed out on the oil press (ekũle-mafũʃ, efãĩ-azũʃ). Although this press is made by one man alone, it may be used by all the villagers. In most villages it is set up near the meeting house and consists of a frame -- two posts planted in the ground at some distance from each other with two cross-sticks tied to them -- and of a board cut to a point near the bottom and attached sideways to the frame, that is to say, it is simply tied to the upper cross-stick (as seen in Fig. 144), or it may be held by means of a pole set at an angle in the ground and passing through a hole drilled in the board at the upper end. In order to hold it tight,

53/
304 swallow tail (ebŏ'no e kiliegŏ'me) (2), c, which has arisen from

2. Psalidoprocne tessmannii Rchw.

the arc without a base set inside a triangle. We have already encountered this figure with the base as a composite pattern in connection with carving, and with the base omitted it is connected with a line as a barbed spear among the nonhomologous modified patterns of the decorative scars.

2) Tears of a beautiful woman (mīlige me mbŏŏ), a single line or parallel lines with short strokes attached at right angles to one side, d. This pattern is preferably applied to the cheeks.

3) Fork (ebăl), developed from the previous one by adding one or more sticks, e, 1-3.

4) Scorpion (kăŭeŭne), like the previous one, with a gap in the middle of the "row of tears," f, 1-3.

5) Monkey tail (ngĕ'm avŏ'm) (3), consisting of a stick con-

3. avŏ'm = Cercopithecus laglaizei
Pocock, white-nosed long-tailed
monkey.

nected with an arc or angle, g, 1-21. This example in particular clearly shows how the Negro's eye seizes just the essential part of the animal, here the tail and hindparts, for, indeed, when the long-tailed monkeys are at rest one sees only their tails hanging from the branches. This fact supplies the clue to the following
[54] riddle:

eŭ'ma gbwĕ e bĕle ma matŭ[k] m'oyŏ'n.
Yellow-bellied long-tailed monkey (4), it is sitting in the

4. eŭ'ma = Cercopithecus grayi Fraser.

branches of the Copaifera.
Answer: nkŏ-etŏb = rope (aerial roots) of the fig tree (Ficus).

583 sufficient time to get to know his future wife and her family.
584 He treats them with the greatest consideration, and for the mother-
606 in-law (nīe-ngǒn III, that is, the girl's mother) especially he has
an enormous amount of respect. He is courtesy itself, bringing her presents, large and small, and from time to time killing a chicken or a sheep for her. In short, one could in all seriousness speak of a mother-in-law cult (see the love feast, Vol. II, p. 24). And above all: oson, oson, oson: shame, shame, and more shame. The son-in-law is unspeakably ashamed before the mother-in-law, and vice versa, she before him. This is especially true after the wedding when the good mother-in-law extends her modesty also to the members of the son-in-law's kin group. Like a thief she steals behind the dwellings into her daughter's house in order not to be seen, and -- who knows? -- perhaps in order not to give rise to mother-in-law jokes.

Riddle:

[539] ŋzě'n e bŏnsǔe, e ne kaangǐ
● [524] Way of the lizards, it is (in the) reeds (Cyperus)

Solution:

ŋzě'n e bonīǵngŏ'n, e n' a
Way of the mother-in-law, it is on (the) stretch

fá
behind the houses.

585 On the day when a man takes his young wife home, the village
535 celebrates with a sizable dance, for which all adorn themselves to
[302] the best of their ability and which the young wife, red from red
wood dye, attends as guest of honor seated on a stool. On this occasion, the popping of blunderbusses may not be omitted, because it belongs to the festive music like our flourish of trumpets. The dancing and shooting last several days when a wealthy chief has acquired a new wife or if it is the first wife of a fellow villager. There is nothing strikingly special about any of this; the festivity simply involves a series of different /262/ dances (among which the dschama is particularly popular which are also customary on other occasions.

578 publicly, as in the case of the paternal curse, or in the field
595 when the women are among themselves. /293/

A droll effect is created when the souls are cursed by their
769 descendants. The curse is pronounced at the ancestral feast if it
578 is believed that the souls of the ancestors no longer care about the living, and the curse is also revoked on the same occasion. Although, as ancestors, the souls were more elevated persons who actually cannot be cursed, here is another instance where might comes before right, for after death the souls are powerless on earth, as we know.

Finally, there is a belief in secret curses, and thus, if people
578 are constantly unlucky in life, they are sometimes afraid that they are being cursed by this or that person.

The most terrible curse is that which was pronounced by Nsambe (God) upon human beings when they committed the first major offense against his paternal will. As described in Volume II, page 59 /Ed., not translated/, the curse is symbolically erased during the cult celebration.

3. Children's Games (1)

524 [113] 1. See G. Tessmann, "Die Kinderspiele der Pangwe" /The Children's Games of the Pangwe/, in the Baessler-Archiv, Vol. 2, No. 5-6, p. 250. The children's games are discussed there in detail.

I divide children's games into two major classes: the generally imitative games, and the independent games. Of the former I distinguish three groups: first, gymnastic games which imitate the movements of adults (running, sport, and dancing); second, war and hunting games which imitate the main occupations, not to say professions, of adults; and third, all the rest of the imitative games. The independent games, which are on a higher level, I divide again into three groups: first, toy games, that is, games that are played with objects and do not imitate any

524 adult activity, second, group games, and third, games of skill. The last group includes the games that have reached the highest stage of development since they are no longer amusements in which all those present participate, but rather are performances by talented individuals. In the performance of magical tricks, the games of skill and acting generally attain their highest degree of perfection. Thus they touch upon the area of the representational arts and might be regarded as a pre-stage of the latter.

So much for the classification of games. I hardly need to point out that the various groups cannot always be sharply separated since the boundary lines between them are blurred by a great deal of overlapping.

I shall mention here only the names of the most common
526 gymnastic games: the foot race, mbĭ'; a combination of our
857 hopscotch and catch, called ngá-ngūĭ; furthermore, rope pulling, edudan, played only by bigger boys and corresponding to our tug of war; chain pulling, ogbŭʌ; "treading," played among the Jaunde especially by almost fully grown /294/ /Fig. 89 appears here in the original text/ boys and called elŭ ma koĕ (Fang, etĭ' (Jaunde), in which two players, facing each other, tread rapidly on one spot and at the end must try to set down the opposite foot simultaneously; and, finally, the dancing game, ekŭkú.

[481] Walking on stilts (Fig. 89) may probably also be designated as
[824] a sport. The stilts are carved out of the umbrella tree, Musanga smithii.

The transition from gymnastic to war games is represented by throwing spears at a disk, a game that is widespread and popular throughout the Pangwe region. It is called ngŏk, after the fre-
[824] quently mentioned Desplatsia dewewrei Burret (angŏk), from whose large fruit the disk is cut. The shoots or little trunks of young trees are used for spears.

War and hunting games are probably the most popular and the most frequently played of all the games. In the small-scale war of the older boys (eight to 15 years of age) -- which sometimes /295/ /Figs. 90-93 appear here in the original text/ degenerates into bad fights -- the weapon is, as in the case of adults, the rifle, copied in various forms with leafstalks (Fig. 90), raffia pith, or

[Text continues on page 170]

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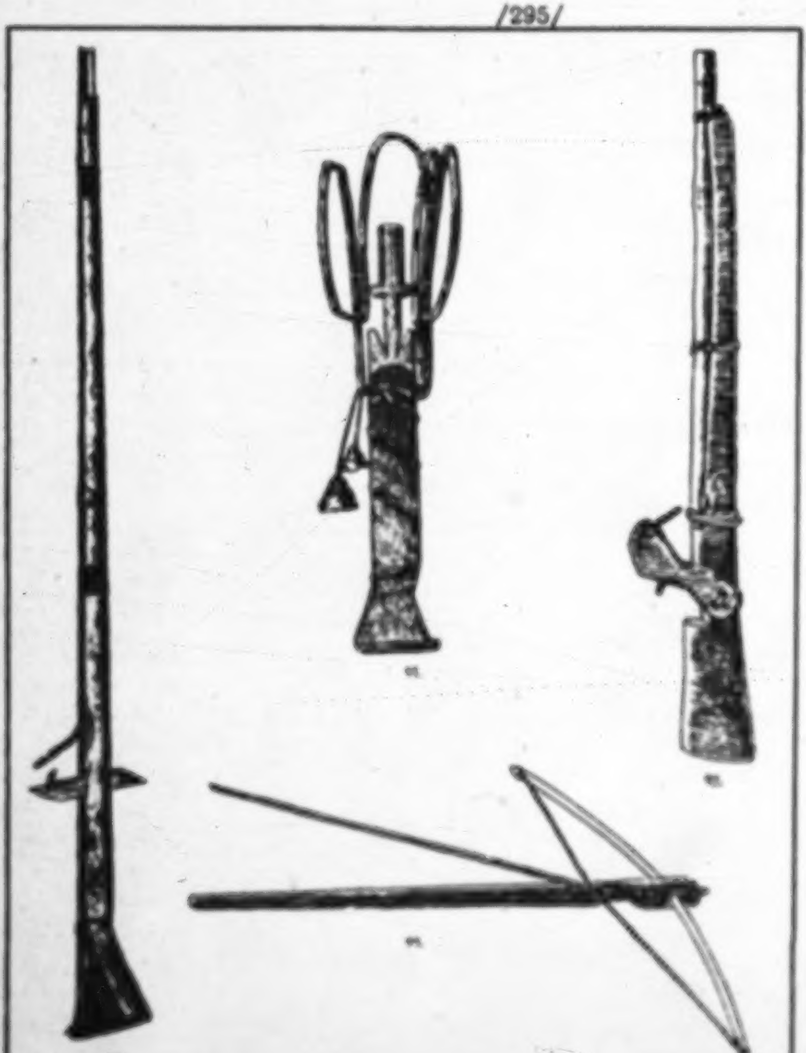

Fig. 90. Child's War Rifle of Plantain Leafstalk.
Fig. 91. Child's Sword of Raffia Pith, in a Bark Sheath.
Fig. 92. Child's Hunting Rifle of Wood.
Fig. 93. Child's Crossbow (Drawn).

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● 524
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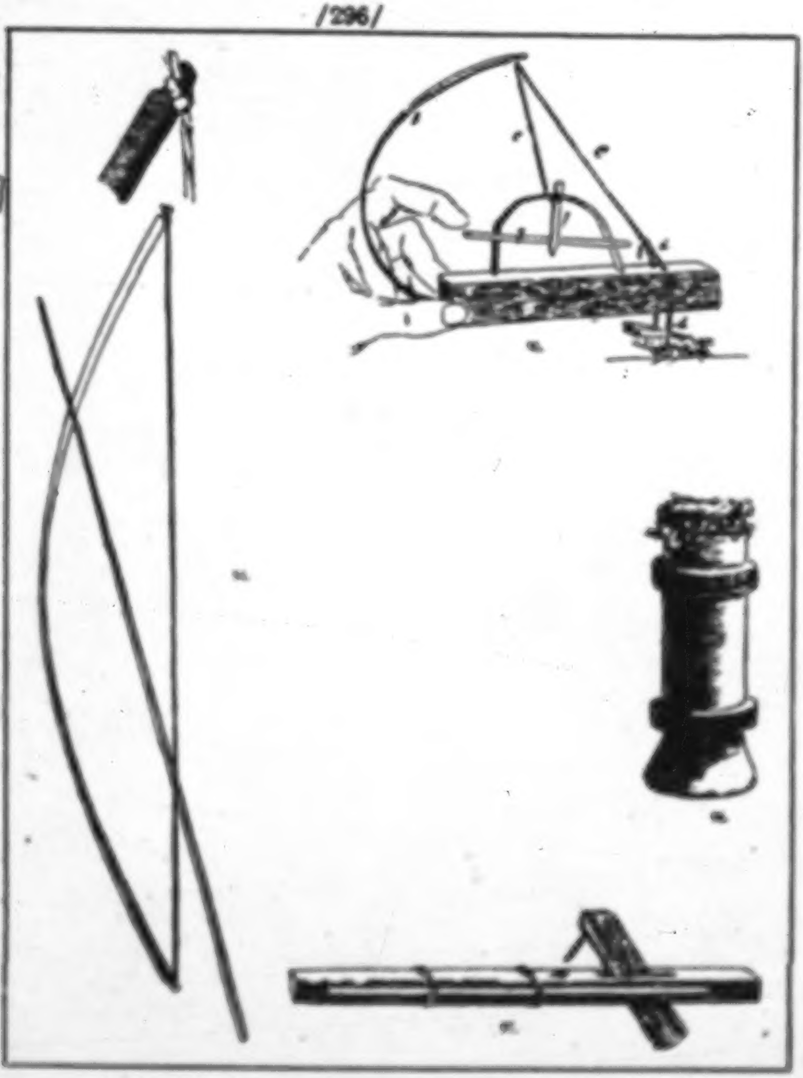

Fig. 94. Bow and Arrow (Toy).
Fig. 95. Draw Trap for Horseflies (Toy).
Fig. 96. Hide Drum (Toy).
Fig. 97. Device of Raffia Pith to Detonate Powder (Toy).

526 other materials. Even the "shining sword," made of raffia pith,
857 is not lacking (Fig. 91); it has the advantage, without being
too dangerous, /296/ /Figs. 94-97 appear here in the original text/ of making a fairly loud clattering noise when struck on the enemy's body, and it causes a momentary, violent pain.

It is really unpleasant to be pelted with corn cobs which have previously been placed in a basket in the river and have become saturated with water /297/; still more disagreeable is a hollow piece of wood from the umbrella tree, which is filled with earth, closed off by means of a bung made of leaves, and then emptied at the enemy at the closest possible range.

A very dangerous "game" is man-catching. For this a number of boys take a piece of a strip of Oncocalamus (bush rope) and tie it into a noose. They hide the latter along the way leading out of the village, concealing it carefully among the grass and leaves, while the free end is tied to a tree stump. The naughty boys then hide behind trees and shrubs and with mischievous looks await the outcome. If a passerby gets a foot in the noose, he naturally comes crashing down, while the boys run away as fast as they can. They are wise to do so, because if the victim succeeds in catching one of the offenders, the latter must be prepared for a good thrashing or a complaint lodged with his father.

In the lower form of hunting, for soft-bellied insects, spiders,
526 etc., they use a rifle made of wood, into which they put some
857 powder (Fig. 92). The delicate hexapods or octopods are stupi-
868 fied by the smoke and fall to the ground helpless. A crossbow
524 made of raffia pith is likewise successfully used for hunting spiders (Fig. 93). For the "higher form of hunting," that is, for killing lizards and mice, a bow and arrows (Fig. 94) are employed. A method of hunting used by adults, namely, the encirclement of a wild animal, is imitated by having a little boy hide somewhere. The fish weirs find their counterpart in small imitations of them. They are set in the channels stirred up by the rain and block the way of little pieces of wood and leaves that are washed along. Even very clever miniature draw traps are made by skillful boys for the purpose of catching the annoying horseflies, which can be outwitted while they suck blood (Fig. 95).

Otherwise, children imitate in play almost everything that
868 is strikingly done or made by adults. For instance, they make
857 useful objects, such as knives and boxes of raffia pith and ex-
●524 tremely charming little hide drums of wood or banana pith (Fig.
96). For the latter, a piece of rat's skin serves as the hide.
The little Fang boy augments the popular banging noise at
festivities with a device made of raffia pith for detonating powder
(Fig. 97). Above all, we may not leave unmentioned the fact
867 that even children imitate a cult and, significantly enough, the
524 cult of ancestor worship which we mentioned above as being of
857 special importance. The ancestral figure is carved out of
plantain pith by the children, and it wears a cap made of canna
blossoms that are strung on little sticks. Only once did I see a
figure made of wood. The ancestral skulls are replaced by --
monkeys' skulls. What a delightful spectacle such an innocent
children's game would provide for the /298/ "initiated" European
if he could observe it unseen.

We have already spoken in Volume II, page 105, of the imitation of family life in which small girls participate. In the main, the game corresponds to our "playing house." The boys endeavor by means of much screaming and activity to imitate the domineering father and try to drag the already quite rebellious "wives" around everywhere, to boss and bully them to their heart's content. The "child," a doll (mōn-ekŏ'n = child made of plantain), Figure 98, the most important thing for the smaller girls, and it is always dragged along by the anxious mother and guarded and fed with great love. The doll is a simple roll of plantain pith set in a carrying band made of dry leaf sheaths of the plantain.

The slingshot, among other things, belongs to the fourth
857 group, the games with toys (nlŏ'go ya dzĭ'me), Figure 99. It
524 consists of a stick to which a raffia pith rope is tied. At its free
end the easily torn rope forms a noose in which a nut of the oil
palm is placed. The slingshot is never used with hostile intent,
say, in war games, but belongs solely to the group of games with
toys, that is, they amuse themselves with this toy because of its
peculiar effect. In using it, the stick is taken in hand, and the rock

857 524 is flung forward. The pull of the rock tears the delicate rope without too greatly diminishing the force of the throw. I also include in this category the rattle stick, the spinning top, the puppet game (Fig. 100), and the device for communicating over a distance (Fig. 101). For spinning tops, snail shells (Fig. 102) [824] are used or a fruit of *Sarcophrynium velutinum* (Bak.) K. Sch. [825] (see Vol. I, Plate 11) which, like the top itself, is called *ndŏʼn*. A little stick of raffia bark is put through it (Fig. 103), and the top is ready; it is made to dance by twirling the little stick, while the Achatina top is made to spin with the fingers in the manner familiar to us.

Even among the group games of the Pangwe, many correspond precisely to ours. There is, for instance, the hiding of an object among the players, while another player, who had previously gone outside, has to find the object. The palm nut game and the game of skittles with spinning tops are very popular.

The palm nut game is called *nigʼn*. The player takes a handful of a large number of nuts lying on the ground, tosses them into the air and then catches them on the back of his hand. The nuts that remain on the back of the hand (between one and five, rarely more) are throwing stones, that is, the player is allowed to throw each of these stones up in the air by itself. While it is in the air, he must pick up with the /299/ /Fig. 98. Doll of Plantain Pith. Fig. 99. Children's Slingshot. Fig. 100. Puppet Game, (a) and (b) Puppets enlarged. Fig. 101. Device for Communicating at a Distance, Children's Game, (b) Cross-section of the Signal Drum. Fig. 102. Tops made of Snail Shells, (a) of *Pseudachatina Dornesii*, (b) of Achatina. Fig. 103. Tops made of the Fruit of *Sarcophrynium velutinum*. / /300/ same hand (the throwing hand) as many as possible of the other nuts lying on the ground, and with the same hand again catch the nut thrown into the air. However, the player is allowed to arrange the nuts on the ground beforehand, for instance, three next to each other. If the thrower catches the stone thrown into the air, all the stones in his hand are his property; if not, they are again common property. Then he goes on to try it with the other throwing stones. Once these are played, it is the next player's turn. At the conclusion of the game, that is,

[Text continues on page 174]

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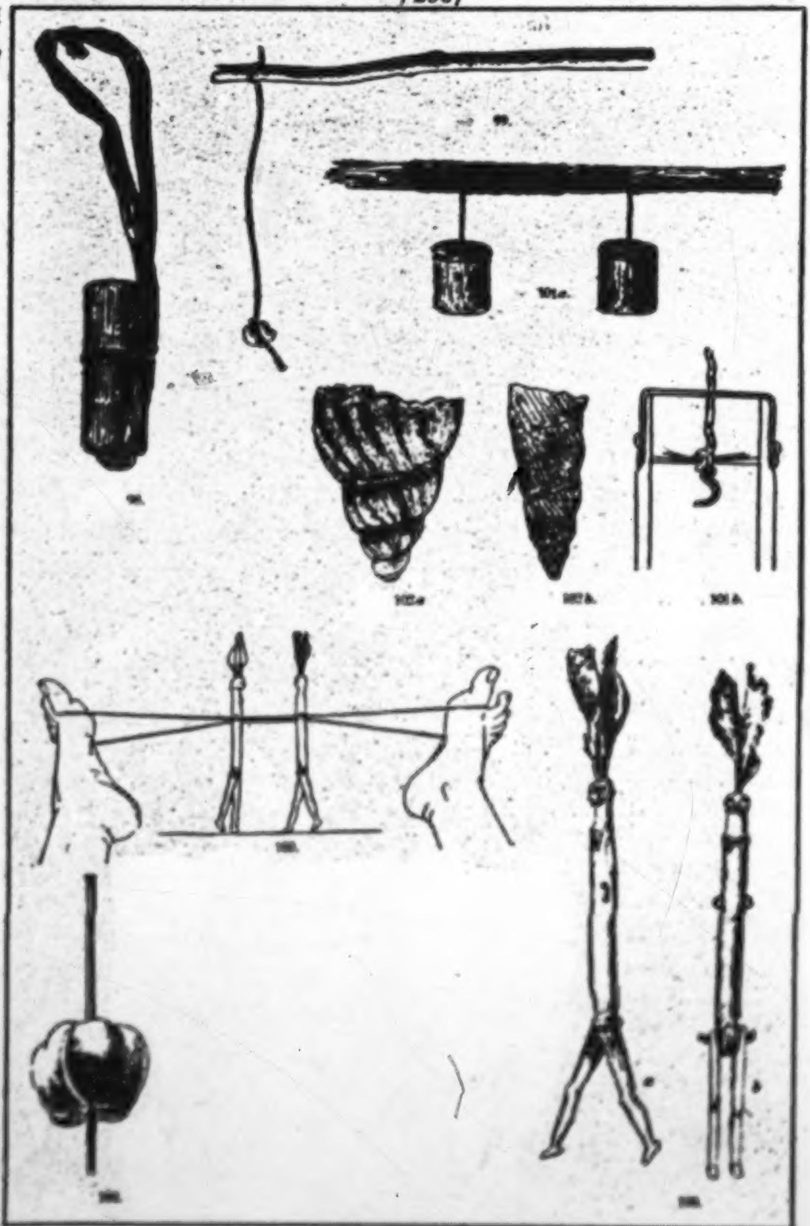

Fig. 98-103.
(Caption on p. 172.)

● 524 857 when all the nuts are in the possession of players, those boys who have caught some stones place together in the center the same minimum number of their nuts. The boy who then has the greatest number of nuts wins. The nuts which have been won are jocularly called "wives" by the boys.

The best known and most popular game of the Pangwe is the game of skittles with spinning tops of snail shells (a lō ndǒ́ño). Spinning-top skittles, as we may perhaps call it, is played chiefly by boys five to seven years old and sometimes also by older ones. They usually play it late in the afternoon or towards evening when the sun no longer scorches the village square. Our Figure 104 shows the arrangement of the two teams and of the skittles, which are set up near the team to which they belong (in Fig. 104, the team on the left). One of the players on the opposing team (the attacking team) has a throwing top which is played in between the skittles, and as it spins, it touches one or a number of them. The skittles that have been touched (nkǒę́n-ndǒ́no) and the throwing top (nwū́an-ndǒ́ño) are returned to the attacking team. The latter then throws the top again. If a throwing top does not make contact (a ke ǒsū nkiai = it goés down the water, westward), it belongs to the defending team which keeps it as a prisoner. If none of the throwing tops has made contact -- something which occurs very rarely since the tops are thrown with great skill -- the attacking team sets up the skittles that previously belonged to the opposing team on its own side, and the team formerly defending now becomes the attacker. The team that throws out the tops, once it has a number of them, plays with them until all the skittles of the opposing team have been hit and now belong to the attacking team, so that the next time around the roles are reversed.

The southern Pangwe know no winner or loser in the game; they "enjoy the game for its own sake," as they say. On the other hand, unlike the Jaunde, they practice giving advances to a considerable degree; a custom which, like the system of advances in the caoutchouc trade of the adults, must lead to an unhealthy state of affairs; indeed, it opens the door to cheating. /301 /Fig. 104 appears here in the original text/ In case the throwing team has lost a considerable number of tops, the defending team, in

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Fig. 104. Skittles with Spinning Tops made of Snail Shell.

order to prolong the game, may lend it a number of tops, but only from those that were lost by the opposing team, in other words, those that were "captured," and not more than eight. For example: the throwing team has lost six tops and has only one top left; in that case the defending team can lend these six, as well as two more lost later in the course of the game. If all eight of the borrowed tops should again be lost, the teams change roles, but the team now attacking (previously defending) does not begin with one throwing top as usual, but with all of the tops taken from the opposing team, in other words, at least eight; moreover, in the course of the game the previously borrowed eight tops must be returned to the opposing team from the eight tops played out. So the game goes on and may be broken off whenever a team so desires. Frequently, however, the boys first get into a quarrel over the loaned tops, and a general brawl is the conclusion of the game which appears so peaceful. On other occasions, too, the little ones try to "rabble" at spinning-top skittles. Thus, a player of the defending team may snatch a top before it has danced its curving path to an end, even though there might still have been a chance that it would touch a skittle.

● 524 The stone game of the children is a simpler form of the same game played by adults. It is called *sō'no* and consists of a
857 halved raffia leafstalk whose pith is hollowed out into 12 compartments, arranged in two rows. To the right and left of the ends there is a compartment, twice as big as the others, for captured stones. /302/

The procedure of the game corresponds precisely to that of the adults and is differentiated from the latter only by the fact that in each compartment there are four canna seeds as playing stones, instead of five palm nuts or other large fruit seeds.

The bowling game, *mbɔ̌h* (*mbɔ̌h* = bowling ball), in which
524 the extraordinarily well-developed observational powers of the
857 Negroes are triumphantly displayed, is quite noteworthy. The
153 average European would probably cut a poor figure in this "child's play"; I at least declined to engage in it. For the bowling game
[824] one must have about 30 of the pill-shaped *Canna indica* seeds. The game leader, A, takes these seeds in his hand; previously, he has already agreed upon a number, let us say 18, with a fellow player, B. This number must now be discovered by the players, or, as the Negro says, it must be "shown." A throws the balls out rapidly and gives each of them, by way of a name, as it were, the numbers from one to 30 as he throws them. Once all thirty balls are at rest -- having of course rolled every which way, in no particular order -- A points to the aforesaid eighteenth ball while B shuts his eyes as he does so, in order to point to the ball himself afterwards. Thereby A is prevented from cheating or -- as happens more frequently -- from making a mistake. In other words, it is a counter-test. In the subsequent throws, in which the same number counts, the players must indicate the aforesaid ball. This often happens with the second or third throw. The one who recognizes the ball first becomes the leader in the next game, in which another number is chosen.

As the final group game, we shall mention a memory game which is popular with boys six to seven years old. It is called *bolŏ'mo*, a name which is also applied to the main player and memory artist who must go to one side or outside the door and then answer. The questioner, seated in the circle of players, has ten

524 peppers, likewise called bolō̜'mo (from olō̜'mo = vegetable), in
857 front of him and a banana leaf (okiā̜i̜') is inserted between each
153 fruit. The questioning each time comes to an end at one of the bolō̜'mo which is then taken away, and the questioning begins all over again, until all the bolō̜'mo have been removed by this process of question and answer. The questions are as follows:

(a) a bolō̜'mo? = Oh Bolomo? (b) ē̜ or assimilated ō̜ = Yes! (c) ižūa̜ a dšǒ̜ o yǎ? = Your father, he said something to you? (d) ta(d)a (a) džǒ̜ ma na: kaa yǔ̜, ndǒ'ng̱o (or džam) = My father, he said to me thus: not to fail in skittles (or affairs), that is, you are not to have any failures (in play or in seriousness). (e) dzidzi? = What is that? (f) bolō̜'mo = vegetable.

Now the questioner takes away the bolomo (the vegetable) and again asks: (a)-(d), then (e) dzidzi? (f) (o)kiă̜i' = Leaf! (g) dzidzi? (h) bolō̜'mo. In the next round of questions the answers are: Leaf, leaf, vegetable, then leaf, leaf, leaf, vegetable, and so forth. /303/

All ten questions are uttered in very rapid tempo, usually to the accompaniment of rhythmical handclapping by the fellow players, in order to confuse the one answering as much as possible.

524
857 The simplest games of skill consist of fashioning droll figures out of a leaf (bǒn̈), Figure 105; braiding together strips of stalk of the Sarcophrynium in a special form (esǒ'n̈), Figure 106; and carving birds and other figures from raffia pith (onon-eśūšū), Figure 107.

Another group of skilled games includes the universally known rope games, which undoubtedly had their origin in the making of rope. Altogether, I am familiar with no less than 40 different figures among the Fang, of which different ones are developed from each other in series.

The highly developed, ingenious "patience games" probably had their origin in the rope games. The aim here is either to separate two objects that are joined (or to put together two separate objects), or to take apart apparently indivisibly conjoined parts.

A widespread game illustrated in Figure 108 is included in the first group. It could be called the two-string bow patience game (atǐn ebe). It consists of a stick of the bark of a raffia stalk with

[Text continues on page 179]

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/Between 302 and 303/

Plate XXVIII

Children Playing Skittles with Spinning Tops, Ntum Region.

524 857 a hole drilled in the middle. A string is fastened at both ends and drawn in a double loop (Fig. 109, *a*) through the hole in the middle. In this way we get two strands, as it were, and on one of these are strung two beads, pieces of a corncob, or the like, although the hole in the middle must always be smaller than the objects used. One bead, if I may choose this object as an example, must now be brought over onto the other strand. The solution of this task will be most clearly seen from Figure 109, Drawings *b*-*f*.

Two different patience games belong to the second group. [825] The first (Fig. 110) consists chiefly of a piece of monitor lizard skin cut into the shape of a fish (*atiiń ekob ɛ tit*), into which a hole is cut at the thick end (head), while in the narrow part (body) parallel longitudinal slits are made. The second part of the device is a string, to each of whose ends a piece of the kernel of an oil palm nut is tied. The pieces of kernel, however, are larger than the hole. The middle part of the string is looped (seen from the front) over the strip between the slits and thence runs from behind out through the hole (see Fig. 110). In order to separate the two parts from each other, the strip must be bent through the hole and the string taken out.

The second game of this group consists of two seeds of the [824] *Pentaclethra* /304/ /Figs. 105-109 appear here in the original text/ *macrophylla* Benth. (*atiiń ebɛ*), each of which is provided with three holes. A double string is put through the holes in the manner indicated in Figure 111, and this is looped around the seed. A second kernel is attached in the same fashion at the other end of the double string, and a knot is made at its center. How the problem is to be solved, namely, to remove the seeds from /305/ /Figs. 110 & 111 appear here in the original text / the string, I do not know myself. Perhaps a patient reader will try his hand at it.

The final group of skilled games consists of the performance of magic tricks (*makǒń me bɔ́ngo* = dexterity of children) whose effect is based upon the fact that the spectator is influenced by the performer and is mistaken in his observation of the basic causes of the phenomena produced, thus permitting himself to be deceived. He does so all the more readily since he is not given any time for quiet reflection on account of the rapidity of execution.

[Text continues on page 181]

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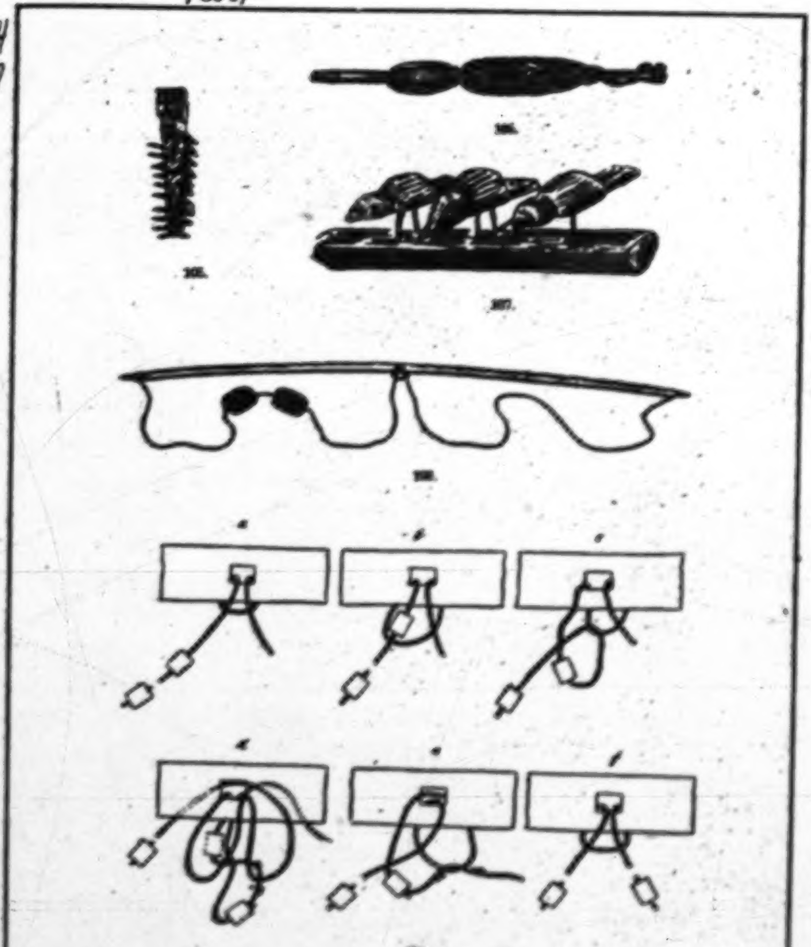

Fig. 105. Figure Made by Children from a Leaf.
Fig. 106. Figure Braided from a Sarcophrynium Stalk.
Fig. 107. Birds Made by Children from Raffia Pith.
Fig. 108. Patience Game with Bow and Two Strings.
Fig. 109. Solution of the Patience Game with Two-stringed Bow.

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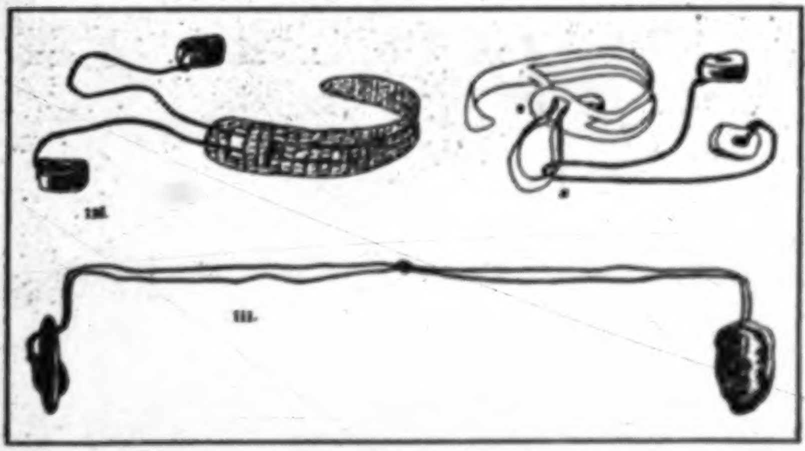

Fig. 110. Patience Game with a Monitor Lizard Skin and a String with Oil Palm Nuts, (a) Solution of the Problem.
Fig. 111. Patience Game using Pentaclethra Seed.

The trick of making a ball appear in the hand of a spectator (efā', from the root fa = confined, enclosed, transitive and intransitive) is a simple one. It is reminiscent of our trick of counting three coins while picking them up and putting them down. For the efā' game an arbitrary number, but not too small, of balls (for instance, canna seeds) or short raffia sticks are laid in a row in pairs. The number of pairs must always be uneven. In addition, an extra ball, called efā', that is, the enclosed one, is put down by itself to finish off the row. Now the chief player, A, and one of the spectators, B, take one ball each from the pairs, and B gets the extra one. In order to influence his fellow player, A, shaking his hand back and forth, calls out after the extra ball "enclosed" by B: "efā', efā', efā', efā', efā', efā', nzak, efā' nzak, efā' nzak, efā' nzak, efā', efā', efā', efā' = enclosed one, enclosed one, come, enclosed one!" Now B is asked to place two balls together. Then A places two together, then B again, and so forth, until all the balls are lying in pairs. To the amazement /306/ of those poor at figuring, A actually places the "enclosed one" as the last one at the end of the row. Thus efā' really did come to A.

Conjuring away the middle one of three leaves lying on top of each other is really astonishing. For this purpose, three leaves of [524]

524 *Panicum sulcatum* Aubl. (*ekǫ̃k*) are placed on top of each other;
557 the apex half of two of the leaves, the upper and lower, is re-
[524] moved. Then the little magician places the leaves with their
underside on the ground and starts to roll them together from the
lower end to the tip. A conjuring verse which the artist now
sings induces the leaf to wander off: "*kügü ekãn*, *kügõ a zǎn*,
[539] *o ke o mvüs* = remove yourself, grass (1), remove yourself from the middle and go to the back!" Finally he hands the leaves over to a spectator to unroll, and it now turns out that the two shorter leaves are lying on top of each other and that the large leaf is at the bottom. This little conjuring trick, by the way, can also be performed with paper strips, one of which is a little longer than the others.

The *ne plus ultra* of what skilled Pangwe boys are able to offer consists of conjuring tricks in which speed constitutes the magic. I shall give a few samples of these tricks.

For example, a boy has a streak of ashes put on his forehead and his hands tied behind his back. One of the tricks is to run behind the house and to reappear with his hands tied behind his back but without the streak of ashes on his forehead. Of course the dexterous boy has put his tied hands through his legs from behind, wiped off the streak, and placed his hands behind his back again. The main thing in this case is the speed, which is indeed astonishing.

A second little trick is that of tying the hands together. The boy has somebody give him a rope, runs with it behind the house, and returns immediately -- with his hands tied behind his back. He had made two loops at the ends, stuck a hand in each, and then by skillfully turning both hands in opposite directions had twisted the rope in such a way as to make one believe that he had really been tied up by somebody else.

A favorite act of our conjurers has its counterpart among the Pangwe in their trick of spiriting away a ring from a hollowed

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1. Collective term; specifically, *Eleusine indica* (L.) Gärtn.

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plantain leafstalk whose hollow, in addition, was plugged with "medicine," that is, pulverized leaves. The stalk with the ring lies on the ground, and the conjurer binds across his hand a piece of plantain leaf in which he has previously placed an identical leafstalk plugged with leaves, but without a ring. He then playfully strikes the ground with the leaf-covered hand and in so doing exchanges with lightning speed the two plantain leafstalks /307/. Then he invites the spectators to convince themselves that the ring has now been conjured out of it. While the spectators comply with this suggestion, the artist quickly puts the ring on his finger and also removes the plantain stalk.

4. Games of Adults

The Memory Game of the Dwarf Antelope

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[illegible]
To my knowledge, this game occurs only in the southern Pangwe region. Like the memory game of the children, it consists of reciting sentences which in this case, however, are not elicited by questions but are uttered by a single player. The sentences are particularly difficult, because they contain many words with guttural sounds whose pitch varies extraordinarily so that even the Pangwe easily makes a slip of the tongue.

[211]
To aid their memory, my boys made use of a long raffia stick on which were strung a whole series of little transverse sticks carved out of raffia pith in such a way that first three pieces, each singly, then two, three, four transverse pieces, and so on, were ranged in groups, in a manner similar to balls on an abacus (Fig. 112).

In reciting each sentence -- there are 12 in all -- the previous sentences must be repeated backwards, and together they form a group which in each instance is introduced by the following verse:

só gbwɛ́ , mvǒá kǐá = fso antelope's horn: "gbuì" (onomatopoetic, in German, tü); rain: "king" (that is, distant thunder, onomatopoetic, in German, bum). The horn of the fso antelope whistles: "tü," and behold, the rain answers with thunder: "bum."

529 153 As we know, the Sao antelope is the animal of the moon, while the moon is mistress of the seasons and thus of rain; if one blows [525] on the horn, the rain, which according to the Pangwe produces [121] thunder, will answer.

Once the twelfth group of sentences is finished, all previously 529 recited groups of sentences must be recited backwards.

153 Sentence 1: nɔ̌m okbɔ̌ŋ́ a ke a
539 Man of the dwarf antelope, he goes to

dɔ̌ŋgan a nkɔ̌́(k) etě
fall in love in the lying trunk inside,

b(a) asɑ̌ngɔ̃n-ogbwɔ̃.
with Amangon-Ogbwo.

The dwarf antelope man goes inside the prone tree trunk (which is hollow, so that the little antelope can use it as a hiding place) to fall in love with Amangon-Ogbuo, literally, the eldest daughter of the magician.

Sentence 2:

ngbɔ̌ne ogbɔ̌ŋ́ a ke a
Offspring of dwarf antelope, it goes to
bɛ̌ nɔ̌́m okbɔ̌ŋ́.
follow man antelope. /308/

Sentence 3:

ngɑ̌́-ogbɔ̌ŋ́ a ke a
Wife of dwarf antelope, she goes to

be ngbɔ̌ne ogbɔ̌ŋ́.
follow (the) little antelope.

Sentence 4: agbɔ̌ŋ́ abai (two antelopes) d'a ke a be nga agbɔ̌ŋ́.
Sentence 5: agbɔ̌ŋ́ ala (three antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̌ agbɔ̌ŋ́ abai (two).
Sentence 6: agbɔ̌ŋ́ ani (four antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̌ agbɔ̌ŋ́ ala (three).
Sentence 7: agbɔ̌ŋ́ atan (five antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̌ agbɔ̌ŋ́ ani (four).
Sentence 8: agbɔ̌ŋ́ asɛ̌men (six antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̌ agbɔ̌ŋ́ atan (five).

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Sentence 9: agbŭ̧ʌ́ zăngbwā́' (seven antelopes) d'a ke a bẹ̌ agbŭ̧ʌ́ asiẹ́men (six).

Sentence 10: agbŭ̧ʌ́ mūǒ́m (eight antelopes) d'a ke a bẹ̌ agbŭ̧ʌ́ zăngbwā̧' (seven).

Sentence 11. agbŏ̧ʌ́ ebū̧ (nine antelopes) d'a ke a bẹ̌ agbŭ̧ʌ́ mūǒ́m (eight).

Sentence 12. agbŏ̧ń avǒ́m (ten antelopes) d'a ke a bẹ̌ agbŏ̧ʌ́ ebū̧ (nine).

[832]

Young lovers like to play the game with their girls, as may be surmised from the somewhat romantic text. Jokingly, the girl says that she will give herself only to the one who can go through the entire game without making a mistake.

The Memory Game (nkŭ́k ondū̃le or endẽle)

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This game is known only among the Fang and a number of adjoining Ntum kin groups, and it is supposedly indigenous. A flat staff with short, paired transverse extensions and vertically inserted knobs is used in the game. The end of the staff usually has a head carved on it (Fig. 113). Each pair of transverse extensions, along with the knob and the adjacent lower part of the staff, forms a segment on which eleven different points are designated for the answers (see Fig. 114).

The game may have developed from an older, simpler one in which the individual parts of the human body were enumerated. This notion is suggested by the designation of the staff as the body, of the carved end -- even when it is not a regular head -- as neck and head, by the tripartite arrangement of the transverse extensions -- absent in Figure 113 -- (corresponding to the upper arm, the

[822]
[831]

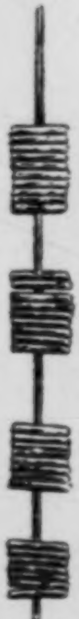
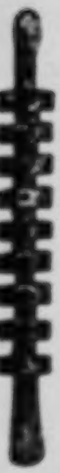


Fig. 112. Stick with Pieces of Raffia used as Mnemonic Device in the Memory Game of the Dwarf Antelope. About one-fourth actual size.



Memory Game, nkuk-ondülle, made of Wood, Southern Ntum Region. A little over one-fifth actual size.

Fig. 113

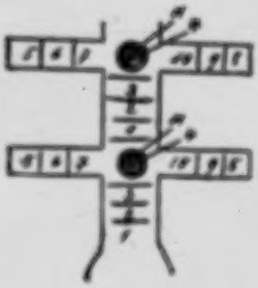


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Fig. 114
Two Sections of the Memory Game nkuk-ondülle.

lower arm, and the hand), and finally by the upright knob, called tsägemVäge (the red one; red as the color of reproduction, of life), by which originally the male sex organ was doubtless understood. The implement is thus unquestionably supposed to represent a human body whose members are multiplied. [822] [831]

The game is played by two people, one questioning, the other answering. The former, seated in the circle of listeners, holds the implement in his hand and indicates the various points that /309/ must be answered. At each one he calls out: "sé sé? = What is that?" (phonetically assimilated and corrupted from dzè dzè). The principal player sits farther away and answers the questions in rhythmic song while the others stamp their feet or clap their hands in time. He is, of course, not allowed to make any marks to aid his memory, such as dividing a little stick into the corresponding number of sections. This is brainwork. 524 153 [533]

The 11 questions, which are the same for each segment, go as follows: 153

1, 2, 3. (see the corresponding numbers in Fig. 114) 524
nkúk ' ondülle wŏ'le. 539
Body (of the) ondülle here. That is the body of the ondülle.

153 4. tsǎngendǒnge nie a tele ni(l) i, a mǒ,mendǒge.
● 524 Red one, he, he stands here, o Momendǒge!
539 There stands the red one, oh Momendǒge (inventor of the game)!

5. mekǐe me nlǎm e nieli.
Breaking of the twig, it (is) here

6. mejidan me nlǎm e nieli.
Sawing off of the twig, it (is) here.

7. bi a ke a buman (or a sǐken) a
We, we go to meet each other at the
mbuman a nzěn, a tade mǒ,mendǒge.
meeting point of the road, oh father Momendǒge
(that is, perhaps, joint of the femur).

8. kǎ,lǒ a bǔma.
Go away to Buma (supposedly an Essamongun village).

9. ye ma ke a bǔma.
(Interrogative:) I go to Buma? = Am I going to Buma by any chance?

10. = 7.
11. = 4.

When all the segments -- usually from eight to 10 -- have been answered from bottom to top, the questioner points to the neck piece:

sě zě = What is that? /310/

Answer: kǐ,ǎ ondǐ,le e nieli
Neck (of the) ondille it here,

and then he points to the head piece:

sě zě = What is that?

Answer: nlǒ ondǒ,le a wǒ,le.
Head (of the) ondille it here.

The main thing for the player, therefore, is always to remember how many segments he has answered, so that at the end he does not make a mistake and, instead of answering the two questions concerning neck and head, begins a new segment.

The Stone Game

Of all adult games, the most popular is the stone game which
524 is spread over almost the entire world. It involves placing stones
[171] in a number of adjoining concavities, and then distributing these
stones among the concavities according to definite rules.

In more recent times, according to informants, the stone
game has come to the Jaunde and Bulu from the Bene (who in turn
[177] became acquainted with it through eastern tribes), and from the
former it was introduced into the Ntum and Fang region around
the years 1895-98. These statements appear to be confirmed by
the fact that the most skillfully fashioned playing boards, provided
with legs (as in Fig. 115), are to be found among the Jaunde and
Bene. They have one of these in each meeting house and eagerly
and frequently play with it. It is played more rarely by the Ntum
[164] and only very rarely by the Fang, who in any case have too many
other, less harmless things in their heads to be able to devote themselves to the game with any kind of passion.

The playing board (Fig. 115) consists of two halved raffia leafstalks tied to each other. By cutting out the pith, each of the leafstalks is divided into seven compartments (ndá = house; plural,
mandá). Only in the southern part of the Fang region (and among the
[151] Basa) did I see such a board made of wood, which then, in most
cases, had one additional compartment for the "prisoners" (Fig.
116) at each end. The playing stones (ngók IV) are put into the
compartments, five in each one. Originally, and sometimes even
today, actual pebbles were used, from which the game was named
sóngo (alleged: small pebble). This name, however, is current
only among the Jaunde and Bene; in the south it designates the
corresponding children's game, while that of the adults is called
akáà because of the large black beads (akáà) that were at one time
used as playing stones but today have gone completely out of fashion.
[824] Instead of these beads, the natives like to take the kernels of the
[194] oil palm or of Rhicinodendron /311/ africanum; in the north and in
various other places they like to take the pebble-like kernels of a
species of tree unknown to me and, more rarely, stones.

524 The procedure in the game itself is the same throughout the entire Pangwe region. Deviations from the ordinary playing rules are to be found only in quite isolated instances.

In playing, the two players (A and B) sit across from each other and place the board between them. Compartments 1-7 belong to A, and those from I VII belong to B. Now each player by turns takes the stones out of one of his compartments and, proceeding clockwise, places a stone into each succeeding compartment, be it his own or that of his opponent. If, therefore, in the beginning player A, for example, takes the five stones out of compartment 5, he must distribute them in compartments 6, 7,I,II, and III; and if his opponent B then picks up the six stones that are now in compartment III, /Fig. 115 appears here in the original text/ he must place them in compartments IV, V, VI, VII, 1, and 2, and so forth. Now, if there are so many stones in one compartment, let us assume it is A's, that in distributing them they go beyond the opponent's row, they are again placed back in A's own compartments, starting with 1, but only up to the compartment from which they were taken, no more being put in the latter. Instead, if there are 14 or more stones, A must place the fourteenth in compartment I of his opponent and then, if there are more stones, continue to the right, up to compartment VII. If by then A still has stones to divide, in other words, if he took up 21 or more, he may not put them back into his own compartments but has to place the twenty-first in compartment I and proceed to distribute them after that in the usual manner.

The goal of each player is to draw out as many prisoners as possible from his opponent's compartments, and the player who has taken the most /Fig. 116 appears here in the original text/ /212/ prisoners has won. The decision comes when a player has no more stones lying in his compartments. In this case the player who still has stones in his compartments adds these to the prisoners, and the highest number of stones determines the victory.

The player can take prisoner all the stones in an enemy compartment if the number of stones does not exceed three. To this end, he must proceed in such a way that the last of his stones to be distributed strikes a compartment in which it is the second, third, or

321 fourth stone. These two, three, or four stones then count as prisoners. Since, therefore, only "houses" with a few stones or, as the Negro says, "people," fall victim to the enemy, we shall call such a compartment a weak compartment while every other compartment, that is, a compartment in which there is no stone or in which there are four or more stones, shall be called a strong compartment.

Now a player, if his last stone strikes a weak compartment, may plunder not only this but also all immediately preceding weak compartments. An example will clarify this. Suppose on B's side there are -- something which he should, of course, have prevented -- one stone in compartment I, four in compartment II, two in compartment III, three in compartment IV, two in compartment V, nine in compartment VI, and five in compartment VII; further, suppose A has seven stones in compartment 5. In that case A will place these stones in compartments 6, 7, I, II, III, IV, and V, and he will take prisoner the two stones lying in compartment V, as well as his own stone that he has added to them; in addition, he will take prisoner the three lying in compartment IV with his striking stone, and the two lying in compartment III with his striking stone, so that altogether he will have ten prisoners.

[322]

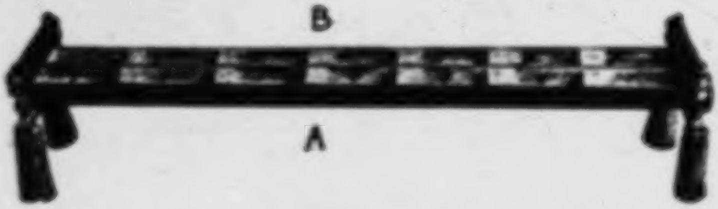

Fig. 115. Stone Game, made of Raffia Stalks and Wooden Legs, Jaunde. One-sixth actual size.

[322]

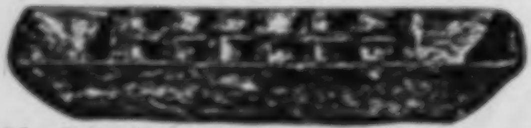

Fig. 116. Stone Game, made of Wood, Southern Pangwe Region. One-fifth actual size.

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524 Thus, each player must take care that his opponent does not get into a weak compartment with his last stone or, in cases not to be avoided, that the preceding compartment is strong.

On the average, the Pangwe do not play the stone game par-
529 ticularly well, but there are individuals -- even women -- who
539 have developed their playing skill to a veritable mastery. In par-
578 ticular, a number of Bulu are famous as eminent adepts in this field in the Ntum territory, and a number of jocular stories that are as widespread as their fame have been coined about them. The majority of these stories are attributed to the "champion" of the Pangwe players, Bekona a Mpfa, the son of Mpfa Mangöö. Sometimes these stories are recited during the game by the more skilled player in an extraordinarily rapid, even tone, perhaps with the intention of distracting and confusing the less assured opponent. As regards their content, these stories pour the most vitriolic scorn upon less skilled players.

Satiric Song of the Ntum

ma ma nga kǒ bekǒ'na, bekǒna a mpfǎ, nǒman
I, I played (with) Bekŏna, Bekŏna of Mpfa, son

a mpfǎ-mangǒǒ. /313/ nǒm kaa masǒn niene: ma
of Mpfa-Mangŏŏ. Man without teeth, he says: I

ke ma dǐi bekǒb be nǒk; mininga kaa
go to eat hides of elephants; woman without

makǒ'n niene: ma tǒbǒ o kpǎ; nkǒkume
behind, she says: I sit down on stool; crazy

dǐǎm a nga wǒǎ sǒ' a bǐm,
thing, it lets pass (a) Sso antelope on hunting drive,

a lige isia a kǒn bekǒna a mpfǎ, ndǒman
it leaves his father sick Bekŏna of Mpfa, son

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539
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a mpfɛ̃, ndɛ̃'man a mpfɛ́ mangɔ̃ɔ̃, niene: ɛ̂,
of Mpfa, son of Mpfa-Mangɔ̃ɔ̃, he says: Come now,

bɔ̃te, mi adɛ́n a kɔ̃'bo (or a ngɔ̃ngɔ̃):
people, you surpass to speak

ye tada a nga kɔ̃n bekɔ̃'na, niene:
Interrogative: father, he is sick (of) Bekɔ̃na, he thus:

a dɛ̃ sɔ̃! kɔ̃ ma nga vui tada
to eat Sao antelope?; but I killed (for the) father (a)

ogbɛ̃n a bĭm o ngũɛ, tada a
dwarf antelope on hunting drive yesterday, father he

tame dɛ̃ ogbɛ̃n.
must eat dwarf antelope.

Freely translated: I was once playing the stone game with Bekɔ̃na, the well-known Bekɔ̃na-Mpfa who is the son of Mpfa-Mangɔ̃ɔ̃. He said: "You really resemble an old man who has no teeth and wants to eat elephant's hide (1), or a woman who has no backside and sits down on the hard wooden stool, and thirdly you resemble the stupid noodle who on the hunting drive lets a Sao antelope (2) pass by and knows his father to be sick at home, infirm from the disease that came from Bekɔ̃na-Mpfa, the son of Mpfa-Mangɔ̃ɔ̃." Well, in that case one simply says: "Come now, you people, you're talking altogether too much poppycock! Even if

[262] 1. The notoriously thick and tough elephant's hide is actually eaten by some people (with teeth!), after being well boiled.

[825] 2. The black-rumped duikerbok, Cephalophus dorsalis Gray.

● 524 my father is suffering from the Bekǒna disease, does he absolutely
539 have to eat Sao antelope meat? After all, yesterday on the hunting
578 drive I shot a dwarf antelope for my father; let my father first eat
the dwarf antelope!"

Satiric song of the Fang (beginning as above)

...mi'nlnga kaa makǝ'n, niene: ma bǝde
...Woman no backside, she says: I wear

asǝa ukukute dǝm, oa lige isǝa akǝn e
raffia apron; crazy thing, you leave your father sick with

bekǝ; wǝna: oa ke a wǝa ngǝ' akǝa.
boils; you say: you go to place stones in the game.

...You resemble a woman who has no backside and wants to wear a raffia apron (the large horsetail-like raffia apron is not suitable for /314/ such a woman). And in addition, you stupid fool, your father is lying at home sick with boils!" In that case one would say (1): "Just place your stones, we shall see!"

1. The translation of wǝna by "one" is justified because wǝna is in a sense directed at the listener.

Satiric Song of the Ntum

o lǝ na? o lǝ fǝ na?
You play (with) whom? You play more (with) whom?

bǝ lǝ, bǝ lǝ! ngǝ naǝ'la; mi'nlnga
People play, people play! Madame Nella (said): Woman

kaa melǝ'n niene: o vǝ ma mvǝ asǝ
without calves, she says: you put me brass wire (about) as

bo nga vǝ, ntsama-obiǝn.
they put (about) Ntsama-Obiang.

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Freely translated: With whom are you playing? With whom are you actually playing now? -- Yes, indeed, people are not equal; some play well, others badly, and Madame Ilsila says: "This is queer, a woman who has no calves and wants to have brass rings put around (her calves), just like the beautiful Ntsama-Obiang! (who of course has calves)."

The first story requires some explanation, since it is, as one of my people expressed very nicely in pidgin English, dear for saby (expensive to know, understand) = hard to understand. First of all, we must observe that the master player Bekóna is what is known as ekí, akǝa, that is (according to the standards set by abstinence rules, bekí), it is not good for the ordinary mortal to play with Bekóna, since in case of defeat, a kǫn bekóna = one becomes Bekóna-sick, just as in the case of an offense against the cult laws, one contracts a cult sickness.

The beginning is readily intelligible. A good average player (who can perhaps defeat moderately good players, but not Bekóna) comes to the master who compares him with the old man without teeth and the woman without a backside, both of whom want to undertake something of which they are not capable, just like the player who wants to compete with Bekóna. But finally Bekóna compares him with an imprudent hunter who lets a fso antelope (which is of medium size) pass by in the hope of killing something better (that is, a larger wild animal), even though his father is lying sick (of Bekóna) at home and therefore would like something to eat, special namely, meat.

Applied to the player, this means: You want to compete with me, Bekóna, and do not let players not as good, whom you could defeat, play with you (in the comparison, the fso antelope which the hunter lets pass by) in the vain hope of defeating me, Bekóna (in the comparison, the larger game), even though your father has already been defeated by me -- for only in this way can /315/ he become Bekóna-sick -- and would gladly see his son avenge him by defeating another player.

The other one replies: Even if my father has been defeated by the master player (= is Bekóna-sick), must he therefore see that I

524 defeat an average player (in the comparison, the Sao antelope)?
539 After all, just yesterday I defeated a totally inferior player (in the
578 comparison, the dwarf antelope)! That has given my father sufficient revenge for the time being (in the comparison, enough to eat).

We see a cornucopia of ridicule poured forth here. Magnificent comparisons! Pithy expressions! Negro poetry with an elemental force!

Game of Chance (abia, Jaunde, Bulu)

525 Like the stone game, the game of chance was not an indigenous
177 cultural possession of the Pangwe. From the Maka (Makie in
164 Jaunde) in the east through the mediation of the Mwogenianga kin group (probably Bene) on the upper Nyong it came to the core of the Bene, who transmitted it to the Jaunde and Bulu. In only the most recent times, the Ntum have become acquainted with it through Jaunde and Bene traders who came to them in the service of the Whites. Nonetheless, I myself have seen people engaged in this game only once, in 1907 in the vicinity of the northern Ntum region. Among the Fang the game is unknown.

525 The game of chance is played with small circular playing disks (sé; plural, besé, derived from esé "goods," because, according to the Pangwe, they decide whether the players are winning or losing and hence, as it were, bring in the money in the form of goods, trade items) which are simply cut out of calabash rinds (Fig. 117, a). Furthermore, the game requires counters (mvi I),
[531] of which each player must bring his own. They are produced from
[524] the hard rinds of the fruit from a tree called abem by the Jaunde, and on their smooth upper surface (outerside of the fruit) they bear attractive patterns of various kinds, animal forms, or human figures, which, like the edge, are carved in relief (Fig. 117, b-d). /Fig. 117 appears here in the original text./ /316/

The number of players that can participate is unlimited, but there must be at least four.

To play (a dé abia), a basketry plate is also needed, into which are placed once and for all seven playing disks (seven again as a

212 Largeau /sic/) and the mekutu alelé, bundles of little sticks making it possible to communicate in code, they had a kind of pictography, ntilan, with tens, if not hundreds, of signs, mindem. These we know (insufficiently) from the counters used in the abia game, a kind of
524 tarots, used as a game as much as for predicting the future; the pieces
787 were made of the seeds, or rather the pods, of a mimosa common in
[illegible] the forest (Tetrapleura /125/ thonningii, according to Trilles). These signs had a surface meaning, understood by all, and an esoteric meaning, restricted to initiates. They made it possible if not to write down traditions as a whole, at least to draw up a kind of aid to memory to be used by the beyia bia. They also enabled scouts to leave messages for a main body of fighters that followed. Each clan,
304 each family had its own ndem, sometimes depicted in its tattoo mark, ndan, which thus constituted a sort of coat of arms.

538 The old literature included stories or tales, minlañ, songs, bia, and chronicles, minkañete.

Trilles is responsible for collecting most of the tales (no. 165), which often took the form of fabliaux whose hero was none other than Ol' Br'er Terrapin, Kulu (emphatic or personal form of kul), the earth tortoise (Cinyxis erosa), surrounded by Beme, the wild pig, stupid and gluttonous, Ze, the panther, mean and cunning, its princi-
[illegible] pal enemy; Zo'o, the elephant, the king of beasts; Abôp, the spider, artful and obliging; and the majority of the other forest animals (except, it seems, snakes, which no one ever likes to mention). Kulu, thanks to his shrewdness, always ends by getting out of the holes in which his caustic spirit or the old hostility between him and Ze have put him. Tales of magicians were also told, or stories about the conjugal mishaps of supposed ancestors. All such tales were in the public domain and were recited by anyone who felt competent. This was also the case with the puzzles and riddles that young people put to one another as a kind of flirtation.

533 Songs, however, were performed by specialists, even aside from ritual or magical songs. Some were used to accompany dances; they represented the most complete form of musical expression, with the tone of the words supposed to fit the music while being related to the movements of the dance. There are still beyia bia competent to lead a dance of this kind by improvisation, but they are few and very expensive. There also still exist players of the mvet (harp-guitar), whose repertory includes, beside the old sung legends, some modern